The Cleveland Museum of Art

Yoga: The Art of Transformation opens on June 22

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Cleveland is the final venue for award-winning exhibition of masterworks from India that explores yoga's extraordinary visual history

CLEVELAND (June 20, 2014) – The Cleveland Museum of Art presents *Yoga: The Art of Transformation,* the world's first exhibition about yoga's visual history. Visitors will be able to explore the transformation of yoga's meanings and practice over time through 135 objects ranging from the 1st-century to the early 20th-century. The works include masterpieces of Indian painting and sculpture, as well as vintage photography and rare publications. Cleveland is the final destination for this award winning exhibition, which originated at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in Washington, D.C. *Yoga: The Art of Transformation* was recently awarded first place for best exhibition and best exhibition catalogue by the Association of Art Museum Curators (AAMC.) *Yoga: The Art of Transformation* will be on view June 22 to September 7, 2014 in the Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation Exhibition Hall.

"The discipline of yoga is widely recognized around the world as a source for health and spiritual insight," said Fred Bidwell, interim director of the Cleveland Museum of Art. "However, few are familiar with yoga's visual history. Through artworks of exceptional aesthetic and historical significance, *Yoga: The Art of Transformation* illuminates yoga's diverse meanings, applications and philosophical depth."

Millions of people all over the world—including sixteen million Americans—practice yoga for health benefits and to find inner calm. Practitioners and non-practitioners alike are aware of yoga's origins in India, but very few have seen the often surprising ways yoga has been historically engaged in India's visual traditions. For more than two thousand years artists have depicted human and divine models of yogic achievement, and their works reveal the development of styles of practice across time and among different communities who understood that yoga had the power to transform both body and consciousness. *Yoga: The Art of Transformation* includes objects from 27 museums and private collections in India, Europe and the United States, including the Cleveland Museum of Art, amassing one of the most remarkable surveys of Indian art.

“This exciting exhibition is a fantastic way to celebrate the reopening of the museum’s permanent collection galleries of Indian and Southeast Asian art and to draw attention to the importance of Cleveland’s holdings in this area on a national and international scale,” stated Sonya Rhie Quintanilla, George P. Bickford Curator of Indian and Southeast Asian Art at the Cleveland Museum of Art. “When visitors look closely they will find Cleveland’s objects at key junctures throughout the exhibition. It is a chance to see them in a whole new context.”

Highlights in the exhibition include three life-size female yogini sculptures of the 10th-century reunited for the first time, exquisite but surprising Mughal paintings of militant yogis and the earliest known illustrations of yoga postures. Islamic divination texts, a fifteen-foot scroll depicting the chakras (energy centers of the body) and early American films featuring yogis and magic are also on view. Noteworthy objects include an 8th- century ivory carving from Kashmir depicting the Buddha-to-be performing strict yogic austerities, large-scale paintings from the collection of the Maharaja of Jodhpur in Rajasthan, and a bronze image of the man-lion incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu in yogic meditation.

Yoga: The Art of Transformation is accompanied by a 328 -page full-color catalogue. Written by leading scholars from the disciplines of religion, sociology, anthropology and art history, the book offers interdisciplinary perspectives. In addition to seven major essays, the book includes catalogue entries that illuminate the artworks’ individual qualities by situating them, for the first time, within intersecting historical, artistic and yogic networks. The catalogue is available for purchase in the Cleveland Museum of Art store.

Tickets

Adult tickets for *Yoga: The Art of Transformation* are $15. The exhibition is free for museum members. As part of Blue Star Museums 2014, between Memorial Day, May 26, and Labor Day, September 1, 2014, active duty military personnel will receive two free adult tickets, including free admission for their children under 18.

Related Programming

Yoga: The Art of Transformation is accompanied by related programming. For more information and updates, please refer to www.clevelandart.org.

Behind the Scenes: Creating The Art of Transformation
Sunday, June 22, 2:00 p.m., Recital Hall.
Free lecture.
Debra Diamond, curator of *Yoga: The Art of Transformation,* shares the process of creating the first major study on the visual culture of yoga. Diamond charts the project from its initial concept and research through interdisciplinary collaborations with scholars, yoga practitioners and exhibition designers. Focusing on masterworks on view at The Cleveland Museum of Art, her talk illuminates how visual culture can convey embodied transformations and reveal yoga’s diverse and profound manifestations in history.

Gallery Talk: Devising Yoga/ Yoga as a Device
Friday, July 11, 6:00 p.m.

Free; exhibition ticket required.
Yoga was devised primarily as a device for meditation in Jainism, Buddhism, and the various sects of Hinduism. Learn about the instrumentality of yoga in progressing towards *moksha/nirvana,* the goal of human existence, on a guided tour led by Deepak Sarma, professor of Religious Studies at Case Western Reserve University.

Exhibition Seminar: Dharma and Darshan
Tuesdays, July 8, 15, 22, 29, 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m., Library Seminar Room
Join Dr. Deepak Sarma, professor of Religious Studies at Case Western Reserve University, for this special in-depth exploration of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and yoga. In each session of this four week class, attendees will first learn about the basic dharma (doctrines) of each topic and then will behold (darshan) exemplary objects in the CMA galleries. $95 ($75 CMA members). Register online, in person, or by calling 216-421-7350.

Blending Yoga Wisdom with Modern Medicine
Saturday, July 19, 2:00 p.m., Recital Hall
Free lecture.
Join Cleveland Clinic Wellness Institute's Mladen Golubic, MD, PhD, Medical Director for the Center for Lifestyle Medicine, and Judi Bar, Yoga Therapist and Yoga Program Manager, as they discuss how and why Cleveland Clinic finds success in fusing ancient yoga traditions with modern medical practices for the overall well-being of their patients and employees. Presented by the Cleveland Clinic Wellness Institute with the International Association of Yoga Therapists.

Gallery Talk: Shakti, Yogini, and the Feminine Side of Yoga
Wednesday, July 30, 6:00 p.m.
Free; exhibition ticket required.
Today, the global practice of yoga is dominated by women. On a guided tour of the exhibition led by Sonya Rhie Quintanilla, CMA's George P. Bickford Curator of Indian and Southeast Asian Art, explore the roles of feminine principles and the ways female imagery functioned historically, when yoga and austerities were largely practiced by men.

Gallery Talk: Visualizing Yoga through Architecture and Landscape
Friday, August 15, 6:00 p.m.
Free, exhibition ticket required.
Yoga today is most often understood as a combination of religious philosophy and physical postures. However, yoga texts often describe ideal settings for ensuring successful practice. This guided tour by Tamara Sears, Yale University, explores the ways in which landscapes and buildings deemed ideal places for yoga practice were beautifully evoked through sculpture and painting.

Gallery Talk: The Yogis: Magicians, Mercenaries, Soldiers, Spies, and Sages from Indian History
Wednesday, September 3, 6:00 p.m.
Free; exhibition ticket required.
How did we arrive at the image of the yogi as an otherworldly Hindu ascetic, sitting upright, cross-

legged, with eyes closed in serene meditation? Ananya Dasgupta, Case Western Reserve University, reveals the lesser-known history of armed ascetics in a tour of the exhibition. Contextualizing select works within histories of struggles over political power, rent, land, and sacred geographies, Dasgupta traces how the yogi was stripped of worldly power and reduced to exotica from an “otherworldly East.”

Yoga and Yogis at the Kumbh Mela Festival
Wednesday, August 20, 7:00 p.m., Gartner Auditorium
Free lecture; reservations recommended.
The triennial Kumbh Mela festivals are the largest gatherings of people on the planet. At their heart are the camps of the sadhus, Hindu holy men, who have been the foremost practitioners of yoga since developing it more than 2,500 years ago. James Mallinson has spent several years in India living with these traditional yogis and has been to every Kumbh Mela since 1992. He is a Sanskrit scholar by profession and specializes in texts on yoga. In this talk he will identify the two ancient traditions of yoga — tantric and ascetic — as found in Sanskrit texts, and show how these two traditions, which continue to thrive, are represented by two different groups at the Kumbh Mela festivals. In addition to texts and his time spent with the sadhus (of which he will show photographs), he will draw on some of the objects in the *Yoga: The Art of Transformation* exhibition to illuminate his talk.

Join In: Sunday Yoga
Sundays, June 29 – August 31, 11:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.
Sunday Yoga presents a sampling of contemporary yoga styles as practiced in the United States, offering museum visitors the opportunity to explore the variety of yoga options available in northeast Ohio. Participating studios include: Atma Center, Cleveland Yoga, Evolution Yoga, Green Tara Yoga, Inner Bliss Yoga, Heartlight Yoga, Reden Yoga, The Studio Cleveland, Yoga Bliss, and Zenworks Yoga; and independent teachers Deborah Suarez and LaToya Kent. Visit our website for a full schedule of classes and information on each studio. $19, yoga session and exhibition entry; $12 yoga session only/$8 CMA members. Register online, in person, or by phone at 216-421-7350. Advance registration highly recommended.

Join In: Yoga on the Lawn
Wednesdays, July 2 – August 27, 6:00 p.m., North Lawn.
Free; no registration required.
Celebrate *Yoga: The Art of Transformation!* Join Zenworks Yoga for a free family yoga experience on the museum’s North Lawn every Wednesday evening from July 2 until August 27. Zenworks Yoga is a Cleveland-based nonprofit organization that works with other non-profit organizations such as schools and other community organizations to provide yoga services to children and families at no cost.

Second Sunday Family Day: Get Moving! The Art of Transformation
Sunday, July 13, 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Bring your family to the museum every second Sunday of the month to enjoy free art making activities and programs for all ages. Explore the museum through dance, music, and hands on projects! This family day connects to the museum’s exhibition about yoga. Take a family yoga class with Zenworks Yoga, move like animals in the museum’s collection, or create your own paper tangka.

MIX: Pathways

Friday, September 5, 5:00–9:00 p.m.

Join us on the first Friday evening of each month for an ever-changing mix of art, music, and mingling. Sip a cocktail, check out the galleries with friends, take part in a collaborative art project, and enjoy the view. MIX: Pathways is presented in collaboration with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Explore the ancient pathways connecting cultures, treasures, and practices from east to west as we celebrate two exhibitions—*Yoga: The Art of Transformation* at CMA and *Traveling the Silk Road* at CMNH. Enjoy cross-cultural drinks, activities, music, and more outside on the pathway between the institutions. $10/$4 CMA members ($12/$6 at the door). This is an 18+ event.

Film:

Yogawoman

Wednesday, June 25, 7:00 PM, and Friday, June 27, 7:00 PM, Lecture Hall.

Once regarded as impediments to enlightenment, women subsequently emerged as the foremost proponents and practitioners of the ancient Indian art of yoga. This film, narrated by Annette Bening, chronicles this movement. (Australia, 2011, color, Blu-ray, 84 min.)

Breath of the Gods

Friday, July 25, 6:45 PM, and Sunday, July 27, 1:30 PM, Lecture Hall.

This new documentary profiles the seminal Indian teacher, healer, and scholar Tirumalai Krishnamacharya (1888-1989), often called “the father of modern yoga.” The film features interviews with Krishnamacharya’s relatives and students (many of whom also became teachers), as well as vintage film clips of the great man himself. Cleveland premiere. (Germany/India, 2013, in English, color, Blu-ray, 105 min.)

Film admission is $9; CMA members, seniors 65 & over, and students $7; or one CMA Film Series voucher. Vouchers, in books of ten, can be purchased at the Ticket Center for $70 (CMA members $60).

Mystical Journey: Kumbh Mela (aka West Meets East)

Wednesday, August 13, 6:00 p.m., Lecture Hall

Special Free Screening!

British actor Dominic West (*The Wire*) and his childhood friend, Sanskrit scholar Dr. James Mallinson (who lectures at CMA on 8/20), join approximately 100 million other pilgrims on a trip to the largest devotional gathering in the world, the triennial Maha Kumbh Mela in India. (Britain, 2013, color, 46 min.)

Yoga: The Art of Transformation is organized by the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution with support from the Friends of the Freer and Sackler Galleries, the Art Mentor Foundation Lucerne, and the Ebrahimi Family Foundation.

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About the Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art is renowned for the quality and breadth of its collection, which includes more than 63,000 artworks and spans 6,000 years of achievement in the arts. The museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and performing arts and is a leader in digital innovations. One of the top comprehensive art museums in the nation, recognized for its award-winning Open Access program and free of charge to all, the Cleveland Museum of Art is located in the University Circle neighborhood.

The museum is supported in part by residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and made possible in part by the Ohio Arts Council (OAC), which receives support from the State of Ohio and the National Endowment for the Arts. The OAC is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally and economically. For more information about the museum and its holdings, programs and events, call 888-CMA-0033 or visit cma.org [1].

Press Announcements [2]

Source URL: https://www.clevelandart.org/about/press/media-kit/yoga-art-transformation-opens-june-22

Links

[1] https://www.clevelandart.org

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